

**Membership Balance Plan  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee**

**1. Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) Name:**

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC).

**2. Authority:**

The Secretary of Commerce approved the establishment of the Marine Fisheries Advisory Committee (MAFAC or the “Committee”) on December 28, 1970. The Committee was initially chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, 5 U.S.C., App., on February 17, 1971, with the General Services Administration’s concurrence, and has been renewed periodically. It has been determined the Committee’s continuance is in the public interest in accordance with the duties and the laws imposed on the Department.

**3. Mission/Function:**

The Committee will advise the Secretary of Commerce (the “Secretary”) on all living marine resource matters that are the responsibility of the Department of Commerce. Specifically, the Committee will draw on the expertise of its members and other appropriate sources, such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), to evaluate and recommend priorities and needed changes in national program direction. Its objective is to ensure the Nation’s living marine resource policies and programs meet the needs of commercial and recreational fishermen, and of environmental, consumer, academic, tribal, governmental, and other national interests.

**4. Points of View:**

- a) The NOAA leadership team is consulted regarding the advice that is expected to be sought from MAFAC, supplemented with data from the agency strategic plan, annual guidance memorandum and emerging policy trends from existing members and other subject matter experts. Based on this consultation, categories of expertise sought include:
  - i. Expertise/experience in harvesting, processing, production, or marketing fish or fish products.
  - ii. Expertise/experience in promoting fishing for pleasure, relaxation, or consumption. This may include operating a recreational fishing business. Recreational fishing experience by itself is not sufficient experience.
  - iii. Expertise/experience as a former or current officer or in a leadership role in a national, State, or regional organization representing marine fisheries interests.
  - iv. Expertise/experience in managing and conserving living marine resources or in representing consumers of fish or fish products through active and sustained participation in local, State, or national organizations.

- v. Expertise/experience in teaching, writing, researching, consulting, or adjudicating matters related to living marine resources, fishery management, ecosystem approaches to fishery science and management and living marine resource conservation.
- vi. Expertise/experience in teaching, writing, researching consulting, or adjudicating matters related to the human uses/values or social sciences associated with living marine resources identified that would be needed to provide this advice.

b) These areas of expertise have been grouped into the following categories: science and academia; policy; aquaculture, commercial sector; recreational sector; environmental sector; seafood/trade; and tribal/indigenous. In addition to the mix of expertise needed, the Committee seeks broad geographic balance based on residence and/or application of the members expertise, encompassing 10 regional U.S. areas as well as a Nation-wide and international area of experience. In addition to the consideration of areas of expertise and geography, final consideration is given to a balance of gender and ethnicity.

c) Because the selection criteria applied is the nature of the expertise of the individual seeking service on MAFAC rather than as a representative of a specific group or entity, all members are appointed as Special Government Employees.

## **5. Other Balance Factors:**

The categories of geographic, gender, and ethnic diversity are considered in the selection of MAFAC members but are secondary to the subject matter expertise required.

## **6. Candidate Identification Process:**

a) NOAA solicits candidates for MAFAC via a broad public solicitation for nominees. The solicitation includes: publication in the Federal Register; posting on the agency website; announcements in the weekly e-listserv FishNews to over 6,000 subscribers; and widely circulated announcements, letters, e-mails and personal contacts to the Regional Fishery Management Councils, coastal States fisheries directors, interstate Commissions, and multiple stakeholder and interest groups. We request the announcement be re-circulated in stakeholder email lists and websites and encourage further distribution via social media and local print trade and news media. To help reach groups of potential minority applicants, NOAA staff work directly with the Department's Senior Advisor on Native American Affairs to distribute the solicitation to tribes and indigenous communities; contact professional societies and colleagues in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands to recruit Hispanic nominees; make targeted efforts around the country to identify interested and qualified black and female nominees through NMFS EEO Specialists in our Regional Offices and Science Centers; and distribute the announcement to contacts associated with Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

These efforts help ensure that candidates are identified in areas of relevant scientific, technical, and other areas of expertise and sectors such as academic, industry, and not-for-profit. The applications of candidates are evaluated by the Designated Federal Officer for completeness and compliance with lobbyist and foreign agent prohibitions. All candidates are reviewed and ranked by the NMFS Leadership Council and the list of ranked candidates then provided to the NMFS Assistant Administrator, who provides his recommendations to NOAA management for consideration and approval prior to submission to the Commerce Secretary for his final selection.

The full list of candidates is provided to the Under Secretary for consideration along with all supporting materials

b) MAFAC Federal Designated Officer/Executive Director, NMFS Assistant Administrator, Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce, Commerce Secretary.

c) Vacancies are filled, to extent possible to maintain balance in expertise, geography, gender, and ethnicity.

d) MAFAC members are appointed for one 3-year term, renewable once at the discretion of the Commerce Secretary.

**7. Subcommittee Balance:**

The process for determining balance on MAFAC Subcommittees is the same as that used for the full MAFAC.

**8. Other:**

None

**9. Date Prepared/Updated**

November 12, 2013